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Violin scale finger positions

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Puzzling over fingerings can be a frustrating experience, especially in expensive editions. Can our instincts be completely wrong? There's a wide range of opinions reflected in printed editions and recordings. So, how do you make good fingering choices that suit your body and instrument while also being stylistically correct? According to Carl Flesch, the ideal fingering should balance technical and musical requirements. It should minimize effort expenditure and carry out the composer's intentions, conforming to stylistically correct performance rules. Yehudi Menuhin notes that violin fingerings are as personal as gestures, offering a range of choices and subtleties comparable to chess moves. Fingerings reflect the editor's opinion and the governing principles and musical taste of string players at that time. In the 19th century, virtuosity influenced all violinists, including Paganini. The easiest fingering wasn't always considered most impressive or expressive. Playing the right notes on your instrument can be crucial in various musical passages. For example, avoiding open strings on strong beats or long notes in a melodic passage is generally recommended. However, certain situations call for using open strings, such as in some orchestral pieces where it's acceptable. One specific case to consider is the opening of Strauss' Don Juan, which often employs an open E string but requires careful fingering due to its metallic timbre and potential whistling sound. On the other hand, in certain passages, the non-whistling E string can provide a good solution. When playing strings, it's also important to maintain finger technique consistency and avoid using the same finger multiple times in a row without switching, as this can create an unpleasant glissando effect. Instead, a different finger should be used for each half step, following chromatic fingering guidelines. Hand size and shape are also critical factors when determining which fingering techniques are suitable. For instance, if your hands are small, you might need to focus on shifting instead of stretching beyond the perfect 4th hand frame between fingers. In terms of finger placement, some techniques may be more effective for certain types of music or personal preferences. For example, caterpillar fingering can be beneficial when there's an extension of a third or more between each adjacent finger. Similarly, using harmonics requires proper finger technique and is often avoided in Baroque and Classical periods due to the importance of solid fingers producing consistent timbre. Ultimately, whether shifting or adding portamento slides is preferable depends on the style of music and personal expression. Shifting serves as a means of transportation, while portamento slides can add a touch of individuality, particularly when associated with renowned violinists like Fritz Kreisler or Jascha Heifetz. Mastering violin fingering techniques requires a combination of practice, experimentation, and understanding the underlying principles. Leopold Mozart emphasizes the importance of shifting on main beats, after longer notes, and considering the key of the work. He also suggests starting with the tonic finger, creating an octave within one position across two strings. Flesch's approach to violin fingering is more flexible, encouraging students to experiment and find logical alternatives. He warns against blindly following printed or inscribed fingerings, as this can stifle personal creativity and development of taste. To improve, repetition of passages is key, allowing you to explore different fingerings and achieve distinct effects. Don't be afraid to venture into less familiar positions, including half-position and even positions. For beginners, it's essential to establish a solid foundation in note reading, accidentals, and hand frames before moving on to more complex techniques. This article will guide you through the basics of first position violin fingerings, covering notes, finger usage, and common confusions like high 2's vs. low 2's and enharmonic pitches. Low and high twos are actually the same note, as they'll either be above or below the middle line. It's crucial to pay attention to fingering charts since distinguishing between low and high twos can be tricky for beginners. The provided chart outlines notes in first position, including low 1, normal 1, low 2, high 2, normal 3, high 3, and four. However, there are other possible combinations, such as using a low 4 instead of the standard fingering for D#/Eb with high 3. When dealing with enharmonic pitches, it's essential to carefully think through your fingerings. Enharmonics refer to notes that can be written in different ways but are essentially the same pitch. On violin, this means making minute adjustments for accurate tonal context. A general rule is using lowered fingers for flats and raised fingers for sharps, although there might be instances where this doesn't apply.